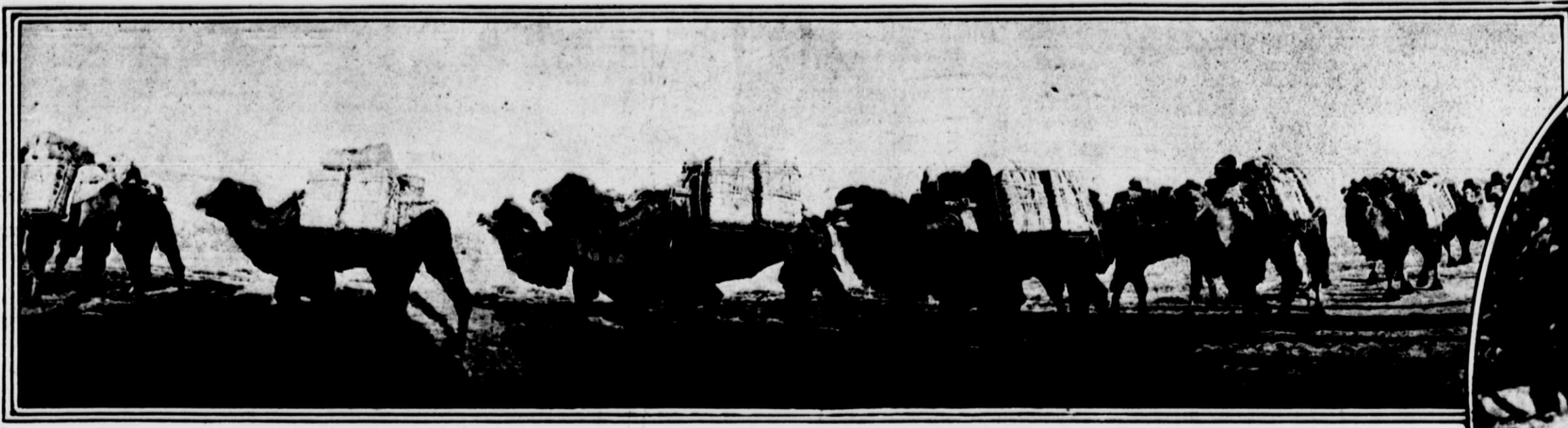


# PREDICTS TREMENDOUS AWAKENING FOR CHINA SOON



To this day caravans come in from the Gobi Desert.

## John C. Uhrlaub, Long Resident of Far East, Thinks Great Change is Imminent in "Child of the Orient"

A GREAT, overgrown but undeveloped child among the nations of the earth, slumbering peacefully for centuries and now awakening to life as it is—China to-day as seen by John C. Uhrlaub of New York, who has just returned from an extended trip in the Orient. China, he adds, is at present just where Japan was thirty years ago, so far as the rest of the world is concerned, excepting that she has between 350,000,000 and 400,000,000 of inhabitants, with boundless resources and practically limitless trade possibilities; and furthermore, China believes implicitly that its one true and tried friend is the United States of America.

"There is every reason why China should so regard us," Mr. Uhrlaub continued. "She knows that Americans have never attempted to despoil her, to loot her of art or other treasures, to force a horrible curse like the soul destroying opium habit on her innocent and ignorant people or to seize with iron fist millions of indemnity, so called, on one pretext or another.

"Always and ever has China felt that Uncle Sam was her big brother, a brother as courageous as he is jealous of her real welfare. When we returned the Boxer indemnity China realized that here, at last, was a nation which would stand by her, protecting her honor as it guarded its own, extending a need of sympathy as practical as it was extensive. And from that day China has looked up to the United States with absolute faith and trustfulness.

"Is it any wonder that a visitor from the United States should find not only an open door but a heartfelt welcome awaiting him throughout the length and breadth of the Chinese Republic? At least that was my own experience, and I doubt not that it could be duplicated in hundreds and thousands of others.

"A curious, fascinating land is China; backward in very many respects, yes, in many respects up to date, alive to the present, looking forward eagerly to the future. Much of the pomp and circumstance are gone, with its wealth of color and picturesqueness; and in place thereof I saw evidences of a simplicity almost Spartanlike. For example, it was my privilege to have audience with the Minister of Finance, Chow, at Peking, and with his assistant Minister, L. C. Chang, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. The reason for granting me the audience was this: Owing in part to the European war, China is facing the possibility that before long she will be unable to carry on any extensive trade with the United States, for the simple reason that she cannot get ships for cargoes sent here and others sent back there.

"Some glimmering of this possibility had occurred to me when I went over last November, and the impression was strengthened by a conversation I had with an Englishman resident in China, the head of what is perhaps the largest importing and exporting house in China and Japan. This gentleman saw even earlier than I the imperative necessity of providing some means of shipment for cargoes carrying trade between China and the United States, and after talking with him and through the kindness of the American Minister, S. P. Reisch, in Peking I was enabled to meet Minister Chow and Mr. Chang. Nothing could more forcibly illustrate the transition period in which China now finds herself.

"The Minister of Finance is of course one of the most powerful men in the country. The day I called upon him was cold, mercury registering about 18 degrees below freezing. I was ushered into an anteroom, which had a dirt floor. There was no carpet; an oval table and eight or nine plain chairs constituted all of the furniture excepting for an old, cheap iron stove off in a corner of the room. There was no glass in the window frames, oiled paper serving instead.

"I found the Minister of Finance in his inner room. There he sat at a little, simple, cheap desk, amid the simplest of surroundings. I noticed that while the walls of the room had been papered, yet in one corner the paper hung down in shreds. Here also I found no carpet on the floor, but in a corner was the counterpart of the inexpensive iron stove seen in the outer room.

"On the Minister's desk was a hand bell that had been broken and was tied together with a bit of wire, and near it were inkstand and penholders of the cheapest kind that you can imagine. All the pomp and richness of the old Manchu dynasty was gone. Embroidered gowns and luxurious peacock feathers were things of the past, as I realized as soon as I entered and gave a single glance at the Minister.

"After greeting me with true courtesy he commenced to speak of the possible future trade relations between his country and the United States, and

before long he suggested a possibility which had not occurred to me until that moment—the idea of organizing without delay a Chinese-American steamship company. He told me how anxious China is to have a line under the Chinese flag, to be in connection with railway lines, the building of which China is seriously contemplating as a necessity in developing the trade of China. In fact, the Ministry has five projects in view for industrial development, all of which seem to me to be very feasible and of inestimable benefit to China and ourselves here in the United States.

"China realizes that she has only one friend in the world, and that is the United States. I believe the day will come when the United States will be very glad to have such a friend as China. To-day China is in the same condition as Japan was thirty or thirty-five years ago—in 1885, for instance, when I first went there to reside for some time.

"At that time foreigners thought the Japanese were not to be taken seriously or to be reckoned with in the world sense. I do not share this view and my feeling as to its falsity was strengthened as I remained there year after year, representing a Paris house, and became able to speak the Japanese language fluently.

"During the recent talks with the present Minister of Finance at Peking he explained how crippled China is financially, owing to the tremendous drafts foreign Powers have made on the Chinese Treasury. And it was proposed that a steamship line be organized under American management, with capital provided by this country and secured by Chinese Government bonds. It is known of course that the British steamships in the Pacific are being converted into cruisers, that the German Oriental fleet is gone or interned, and this leaves for China's shipping practically nothing besides the Japanese lines excepting the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's boats, and that company is seriously affected as a result of the new navigation laws recently enacted at Washington.

"The need of such a steamship line as is proposed is evident and the results may be very great. Thirty-five years ago there was not a single ship in the Japanese merchant marine, but to-day the Japanese flag is in every port of the world. Half a dozen large lines are subsidized by the Japanese Government and the development is not ended, not by any means. It is simply incredible the tremendous

progress Japan has made in a few decades. "Go to Tokio, as I did recently, after twenty years absence, and you will feel that some one has caused a magical and complete transformation by rubbing Aladdin's lamp. To have effected such transformation without magical influence seems almost impossible to one who knew Japan in 1895, say, and then sees her to-day.

"The dirty, little, dingy streets are gone, and in their place are broad, clean, beautiful highways that would be a credit to any American or European capital. Modern buildings of all kinds, underground railways, electric lights, luxurious theatres and elegantly appointed hotels—every evidence of the most modern and complete civilization as we of the Western world know it. Why, look even at Corea for evidence of Japan's wonder; go to Seoul and there you will find a hotel costing \$800,000, built by Japanese, which is equal to any in the United States.

"What Japan has done in the past thirty or forty years I believe China may do in the three or four decades; only China is so much larger, her wealth and resources and trade necessities are so much more enormous in the aggregate as to overtop away out of sight that already accomplished by Japan. As to the Chinese-American line of steamships, proposed to me by the Minister of Finance, nothing can be definitely said at present. Freight rates just now are abnormal; it is not to be expected that after the war they will remain at this high level. But when the war is over the German merchants in the Orient are going to do business again.

"They will not give a pound of

freight, going or coming, to either British or Japanese steamships if they can help it; but they will be very glad to offer to neutral lines all the freight their own boats cannot take for one reason or another. Likewise, English merchants and Japanese merchants, who will fully resume business at the close of the war, will not favor German lines with their cargoes; and a great deal of English and Japanese freight could be diverted easily to American or Chinese-American boats if they should be ready to handle it.

"We must not lose sight, either, of the fact that during the present hostilities in Europe a great many ships are being sunk and otherwise destroyed. These will have to be replaced by other ships owned by somebody, for the demand to carry freight will spring up again.

"There is another thing that a good many persons perhaps have not had brought to their attention. It will take many ship bottoms to carry to Europe material that Europe will have to have in rebuilding the cities and towns now being ruined on every hand. Timber, iron, raw material of every kind will be needed, and also will be needed the men to get them out of the earth and into shape where they can be worked over into manufactured articles. I do not think that all Europe will be able to furnish building iron, structural steel and lumber as fast as will be needed for rebuilding of the cities and towns laid waste; and yet as soon as peace comes such rebuilding must be undertaken at once.

"Immediately Europe will be confronted with the fact that irrespective of her mines and forests a vast proportion of her labor supply has been destroyed. A couple of million

able bodied men killed and another two million or more maimed for life—and no prophet can foretell as yet how much larger the number will run ere peace prevails again. We of America will have to do the work. In doing it we will have to call on China for much of the merchandise as well as material. And we must have ships to carry all this necessary cargo if we are to aid Europe to get on her feet again."

Mr. Uhrlaub expressed himself as seriously concerned over Japan's recent proposals regarding China.

"Do you know what would have been the result had China accepted the demands that Japanese officers should train and direct China's army? Let me tell you in a word; the Japanese military men, by thus achieving command, could have decided just who should be brought into the army of China; with a population of nearly 400,000,000 Chinese to draw upon, Japan thereupon could organize, equip and train the largest army of fighting men the world has ever seen. And this military machine of incalculable power, trained to Japanese standards of efficiency by Japan's ablest officers, would have been a menace to civilization."

"To-day's China's army, like our own, is simply negligible, when compared with other organizations of fighting men; but, like our own, because of the intelligence prevailing among the population, it could easily be brought in the course of a few years to a very high order of efficiency."

"Yes," Mr. Uhrlaub went on, reflectively, "to-day China is the child of the Orient, stepping toward Western civilization. Thorough, thrifty,



Stepping from the Orient toward Western civilization.

## She Regards United States As Her Only Friend Among Nations—Chinese-American Ship Line Urged

hard working China is the Teuton of Asia, while Japan is like the French of mercurial temperament. What China has yet to learn is to cease looking backward and to look forward into the future.

"Ancestor worship is not merely a religion, it is an obsession. We in America look far ahead and ask ourselves what we can do so that our children will be further advanced than we in every way. The Chinese, on the other hand, look backward and ask what their remote ancestors would do about this or that or the other thing. "Of course there is no Government in China such as we understand the word. The republic is working out, but very slowly, very slowly. I believe that Yuan Shih-Kai has the best for China at his heart; but Sun Yat-sen, who is in exile in Japan, is continually trying to foment trouble against President Yuan. They are very different types of men, of course Sun Yat-sen having come from a coolie family, having been brought up by Missionaries in Hongkong, and being known as a 'rice Christian.'"

"As to financial and economic China to-day, I am convinced that she needs is a proper organization and collection of her taxes in order to be relieved of onerous burden. Formerly the salt tax brought a very small return to the Government; but when hypothecated to a British financier and managed under his direction, it shortly increased five or six times, and this without adding new load to the taxpayers but by honesty and economy of organization and collection.

"The entire land tax of China—the whole of China, remember—brings to the Government treasury each year

only about \$14,000,000. Men of ability and observation tell me that a proper administration it could turn out not less than \$400,000,000.

"The Chinese Government is desirous of getting a number of Americans to go over there and organize its financial plans and methods as related to taxation. In reference to this the Minister of Finance Chow, said to me, 'We want Americans in our employ, but do not want who have been long in China.' 'Say Americans,' Mr. Uhrlaub explained, 'have learned too well the Chinese saying, 'mask,' which means 'mind-to-morrow.' It corresponds in meaning to the Spanish *mañana*."

"Minister Chow, by the way, has been secretary of the Chinese Legation at Washington. He is about forty years of age, speaks fairly good English, is very shrewd and is a good words."

"The China of to-day, with American college graduates here and there, American utilities, American automobiles, is only a small part of the China. Long caravans of camels come slowly in from the desert. Gobi, bearing their precious furs, the Great Wall still stands, more down upon by immense black mountain ranges; the Chinese boys and girls are still taking headlong from the Orient toward the West, and the open air restaurants have, as yet become inundated with cash shows.

"One of the strangest sensations I experienced in China was to dine at the home of a Chinese gentleman and be served with a Manchu cocktail, excellent, sherry, champagne and with bird nest soup and grilled shark's fins. The country seems to me to present a congruous condition. Yet, I see evidences of the highest civilization by side with the lowest.

"One time I entered a Chinese restaurant with my interpreter. This was in Canton and I found patients there to eat food which was cured them of certain diseases. Around were live animals and snakes, deer, and so on. I gave a glance in a glass case and saw a snake when another man came a Chinese, who carefully held a certain snake, which he attended then took from the case and ate it was at once killed and cured.

"I asked my interpreter what earth that Chinese gentleman ate to eat snake meat for, and he replied: 'You know that fact a snake can travel up a wall notwithstanding the fact that it has no legs? Well, sir, try to travel up a wall. The gentleman who was consuming that snake meat was a rheumatism in his legs. He ate it to prevent him from walking. Therefore he eats snake meat to cure his legs.'"

"Perfectly simple, I thought. I continued, laughing, 'But you hadn't thought of a snake as an extraordinary strength?' He replied, 'Yes, but snakes and arms, they are the same, swinging from limb to limb. The ablest of living animals are those of people in that manner. They were eating monkey meat, and my interpreter pointed out that they had gaily affectionate joints, and so on, as he made statements.

"Another kind of monkey was I certainly did enjoy. I saw several stories. It was a cent for your tea and the others here were coolies. The monkey increases the higher you go. The very top floor cost about 20 cents in American money for his tea.

"Here I found the monkey the very best classes of society. Many brought with them favorite pet birds in cages. The cages were hung up on the wall for the purpose while the monkey was sipping tea and chattering. It was a constant ripple of laughter, and it was a scene long to be remembered."



A section of the great wall built as protection against foreign barbarians. Above—Open air restaurants in China have no cabarets attached.

